



## Message from the Executive Director

*Sometimes it can be hard to keep up. Things change so quickly in our world, even when they seem to move at a snail's pace.*

*Since 2002, NHCSW has kept a watchful eye on the reauthorization of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). For years, the federal government has extended the deadline for reauthorization, keeping states in limbo waiting for new rules and regulations. This spring, as part of the Deficit Reduction Act, the feds did reauthorize TANF, implementing a new program that tightens work*

*requirements and puts states in jeopardy of facing stiff penalties if its welfare population does not meet stricter work participation rates. The clock on these new rules begins on October 1, 2006—not much time to prepare a proactive and productive response.*

*How will we, as a state, face this challenge? We'll need to push to get more women skills for jobs that pay a living wage; we'll need to rally to bring new ideas like micro-enterprise—successful in such places as India—home to our own*

*neighborhoods; we'll need to be ever vigilant to protect those women fleeing from domestic violence, suffering from mental illness, living with disabilities, caring for children in poverty to be sure they are provided the resources needed to make sustainable change in their lives—that's change that doesn't come overnight, but over time.*

*Please join us in this effort. The train is out of the station, moving fast, but with good will and good ideas, we may be able to make good change happen.*

*Terri de Langis*

## Manual de Derechos de las Mujeres de New Hampshire 2005

On October 28, 2005, in the Governor and Executive Council Chambers, a press conference was held to announce the release of *Manual de Derechos de las Mujeres de New Hampshire*, the first Spanish translation of the *Legal Handbook for Women in New Hampshire*, published by the NH Commission on the Status of Women with the assistance of a 27 member Advisory Committee.

After the press conference, the YWCA of Manchester hosted a celebratory party, where past and present Commissioners were recognized for their contributions over the years to the Handbook. Alderwoman Betsy Devries opened the reception on behalf of the full YWCA board.

The Legal Handbook was first published by the Commission in 1997, and since that time thousands of copies have been distributed statewide. The Handbook covers such topics as education, employment, housing, sexual and domestic violence, and family law. It includes an extensive resource directory of local agencies and low-cost legal assistance.

In 2004, the Handbook was updated and expanded to include issues of particular relevance to immigrant and refugee women. As a result, the Handbook has become an important tool for individuals, service providers, and others to gain a better understand the federal and state laws pertaining in particular to immigrant and refugee women in New Hampshire

The Spanish translation of the Legal



Commissioner Jessica Stern, Spanish translator of the Legal Handbook for Women in New Hampshire, and Governor John H. Lynch

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# Eldercare Management: Spotlight on Solutions

By NHCSW interns Samira Alic and Jennifer Reed

A hundred years ago the average American lived to be forty-five years old. Due to improved living standards and better healthcare, the average American now lives to be seventy-four. For women, that fact has special ramifications: women not only live longer than their male counterparts, but they are much more likely to be caregivers to elders—even while, often times, still caring for dependent children at home.

AgeQuest, LLC, was created to help caregivers meet the challenge such responsibility presents. The organization provides consultation services, information, and referrals, among other services, to better negotiate eldercare management. Nancy Euchner, the founder of AgeQuest, has worked in this field for over thirty years, many of them as a nurse practitioner. She has participated in over 80 national projects looking at models for geriatric care. Through these experiences, she identified the need to better understand the needs of caregivers themselves.

In Nancy Euchner's experience, elderly women, especially elderly widowed women, face significant economic challenges. "These women have problems paying for services [and] in many cases the care for their deceased husbands used up most of their savings." In such instances, the greatest goal is to stretch whatever resources are available as far as possible. Younger women who serve as caregivers also face numerous challenges. Many of them must balance paid work, caring for children and caring for parents. Providing care for the elderly can take a physical and emotional toll on the caregiver. "Many of these women experience depression because they put their needs last," explained Euchner. "Most are looking for a source of correct information, a step-by-step plan to make the experience easier on them." This is precisely what AgeQuest provides.

AgeQuest's model for eldercare management involves three important steps. The first step is a comprehensive assessment of the situation, which includes working with caregivers to assess health status of the elderly person and identify support and resources in the local community. The second step is the implementation of the care-giving plan, or as Euchner puts it, "putting words into action." The last step involves giving caregivers tools to succeed at and monitor elderly care. These steps are achieved through ongoing support and communication between caregivers and AgeQuest counselors. Although the organization mainly serves the seacoast area, Euchner hopes to expand westward in the coming years.

The innovative vision of its founder is evident in the organization's name. In choosing AgeQuest, Euchner wanted to convey a sense of partnership. After all, as Euchner points out, "Aging is not something that happens only to old people, but to all of us. It's a gift, not a problem."

**Congratulations to recipients of the  
19th Annual New Hampshire High School Women's Athletic/ Academic Awards.**

**The awards ceremony was held February 6, 2006 at the Capitol Center for the Arts  
in Concord and honored nearly  
600 female scholar athletes from throughout New Hampshire!**

## Legislative Alert: Women's Prison Issues

Propelled by the December 2004 release of *Double Jeopardy: A Report on Training and Educational Programs for New Hampshire's Female Offenders*, NHCSW focused its efforts this legislative session on assuring the passage of SB 262, an act establishing an administrator of women offenders and family services in the NH Department of Corrections (NHDOC), as well as creating an interagency coordinating council comprised of the three branches of government and community service providers.

In a system designed for men, rehabilitation and other services specifically for female offenders has historically fallen short of those provided to male offenders. In 2003, NHDOC reported spending \$4,564 less annually per female inmate as compared to male inmates at the NH State Prison for Men (NHSP/M) and \$1,906 less annually as compared to male inmates at the Northern Correctional Facility (NCF). At the time of the release of "Double Jeopardy," the NH State Prison for Women (NHSP/W) was the only facility in the NHDOC system that did not offer a state-funded parenting program. NHSP/W had no on-site medical unit and was

out of compliance with the ADA for its aging population. The state also did not provide programming to female victims of abuse, while research suggests it is a leading contributing factor for criminality in women. State-run and state-funded domestic violence programs are and have been provided to inmates at NHSP/M and NCF.

The majority of women in prison are non-violent, low-risk offenders. The vast majority (85-90%) of female offenders are mothers, and typically are the primary custodians of and providers for at least two children. The state pays on average \$24,000 per year per female inmate and another \$25,000 per year for each child placed in foster care while the mother is incarcerated. Like their male counterparts, female offenders experience a 50% recidivism rate. Introducing measures to effectively rehabilitate these women will decrease the rate of recidivism, allowing the state to save thousands of dollars each year.

Based on the recommendations of "Double Jeopardy," SB 262 seeks to correct long-standing inequities in services provided to female offenders by establishing an administrator position to

oversee the implementation of gender responsive management strategies for incarcerated women. SB 262 also establishes an interagency coordinating council comprised of representatives from the three branches of government and community organizations. Sen. Sylvia Larsen was the tireless prime sponsor of the bill, and she was joined by a bi-partisan group of nine legislators from the Senate and House.

SB 262 was signed into law by the Governor on June 12, 2006. A ceremonial bill signing will take place in July with Governor John Lynch and the many stakeholders who secured the bill's passage. Arrangements are in the making to assist former female inmates—graduates of the Leadership Initiative at Shea Farm, conducted by the NH Task Force on Women and Recovery—to attend.

Congratulations to all who worked so diligently to assure passage of this important piece of legislation! It's passage is a historical benchmark making the female offender population the particular focus of policy analysis and gender responsive, trauma informed program implementation.

## Commissioner Spotlight

*The Commission is comprised of 15 members who are appointed by the Governor and Executive Council. Members are non-salaried and serve a maximum of two, three year terms.*

The Governor and the Executive Council have appointed two new members and new leadership to NHCSW. Valerie Cunningham of Portsmouth and Sylvia Gale of Nashua are the two newly appointed Commissioners. Laurie Chandler of East Kingston has been appointed to Commission Chair, and Elizabeth Paine of Andover to Commission Vice Chair.

Ms. Cunningham is the founder and president of the Portsmouth Black Heritage Trail, Inc. and co-founder of the Seacoast African-American Cultural Center, the Blues Bank Collective, and the New Hampshire Circle of Friends. Ms. Cunningham is the recipient of numerous awards for her efforts to raise awareness and preserve the history of African Americans in the state. Ms. Cunningham's experience and expertise will contribute to the Commission's vision of identifying and seeking to remedy historical and institutional discrimination which act as barriers to women's basic rights.

Ms. Gale is the Supervisor for the Nashua District office, Division of Children, Youth and Families of the state of New Hampshire. She is currently a member of the Attorney General's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect and a board member of the Child Advocacy Center of Southern Hillsborough County. She brings to the Commission considerable expertise about the welfare and needs of low-income families, especially those headed by single women.

Pat Yosha, former Chair of the Commission, has stepped down from her position while still remaining on the Commission for the last year before her final term expires. Laurie Chandler will replace her as Chair, promoted from the Vice Chair position, with Elizabeth Paine filling this seat. Ms. Chandler's leadership skills, patience, and experience, combined with Ms. Paine's articulate and intelligent approach to policy issues ensures that the Commission will continue to affect positive change for the women of the state. "I am confident the Commission will continue to promote vital opportunities for women under the able leadership of Ms. Chandler and Ms. Paine," said Yosha.

### Women's Wednesday

On March 8, 2006, NHCSW hosted a policy briefing luncheon event featuring economist Ross Gittel's presentation on "Family Organization and Its Effect on the Economic Status of Women in New Hampshire." The event was supported by Senator Sylvia Larsen, Senator Sheila Roberge, Representative Terie Norelli, and Representative Sheila Franceour, and held in collaboration with the NH Women's Policy Institute.

Nearly 100 female and male legislators attended, reporting through surveys that they found the information to be personally and professionally relevant and applicable to current pressing legislation. The event was sponsored by a generous donation from Keyspan.

*(continued from page 1)*

Handbook recognizes and addresses the unique challenges of Hispanic women and their inclusion under state and federal civil rights codes that serve to remedy discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

At the press conference, Governor Lynch stated, "Access to legal resources and the judicial system must be available to all New Hampshire residents, and language should not serve as a barrier to such access."

The Spanish translation, which took almost two years to complete, was provided by Commissioner Jessica Stern. Proofread-

ing and editing were conducted by Carmen Bertrand of the Greater Manchester AIDS Project. The Spanish translation of the Legal Handbook was funded in part by a Justice Grant awarded by New Hampshire Bar Foundation. Additional printing costs were provided by the Violence Against Women Grants Office, Office of Justice Programs, US Department of Justice, administered by the New Hampshire Department of Justice. Many thanks are extended to all who contributed!

*Manual de Derechos de las Mujeres de New Hampshire*  
DOWNLOAD NOW @  
[www.nh.gov/csw](http://www.nh.gov/csw)

### YWCA GIRLS AND LEADERSHIP SUMMER CAMP

*\*The YWCA is soliciting donations for scholarships to the Program\**

*For further information please contact:*

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## Supporters

We would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their generous support of the Commission.

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## Legislative Wrap-up

In addition to SB 262 (please see page 2), the Commission had a successful legislative session with numerous bills on its legislative agenda.

Thanks to Commissioners Linda Johnson and Pat Yosha for their testimonies against HJR 26, which urged Congress to reevaluate Title IX. HJR 26 was killed after the first public hearing. The supporters of the bill argued that Title IX hurt men's athletic programs, and its implementation has not benefited public educational institutions.

The Commission also assisted in derailing HB 1746, restricting eligibility for Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and HB 1728, restricting time limits on TANF. HB 1461, establishing a Task Force to study the adequacy of TANF benefits, did pass and has been signed into law by the Governor. Commissioner Sylvia Gale will represent NHCSW on the Task Force.

Other TANF news is not so good. HB 1331 is a complete restructure of the state's TANF guidelines and sanctions procedures, implementing punitive measures on an already fragile population. Met with great opposition from community members and experts during the legislative session, the bill nevertheless

passed the House and Senate. The Governor let HB 1331 become a law without his signature and this issued an executive order.

Other bills of interest to NHCSW included HB 1732, repealing the fund for domestic violence grant program via marriage license fees. Sponsored by Rep. David Bickford, the bill was killed by unanimous vote in the House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee early in the session. Other bills sponsored by Rep. Bickford included a list of family law proposals that directly related to child custody and support provisions. Of these, HB 1580 prompted the most concern, tying as it did on a "per diem" basis the amount of time a parent spends with a child directly to the amount of money to be paid in child support. If passed, the child support formula proposed in the bill had the potential to immediately—and in many cases dramatically—decrease child support payments for hundreds of families in the state. While advocates successfully defeated the bill this year, Rep. Bickford and others have promised the bill will show up again in some form next year.

Interested in receiving the NHCSW legislative alerts? E-mail [Jeanne.Brooks@nh.gov](mailto:Jeanne.Brooks@nh.gov) with the subject: SIGN ME UP

## Internships Available

Volunteer in the heart of the state's capitol and get valuable experience in research, communication and organizational skills.

Projects and programs include monitoring legislation, promoting opportunities for women to develop their skills and education, and recognizing women for their accomplishments. Interns and volunteers should have an interest in Women's Issues, Political Science, Government, and the Legislative Process.

If you are interested, in long or short-term availability, contact the Commission office at 603-271-2660 or by email to: [Jeanne.Brooks@nh.gov](mailto:Jeanne.Brooks@nh.gov).

## Upcoming Internship opportunities

**Year-round: NHCSW Archives**

*Archivist / research of women's history*

**Fall: Public Relations**

*Letters to the editor, event planning*

**Spring: Legislative Advocacy**

*Monitor legislation, legislative research*